

October 6th, 2024

## **Acts 3 and 10 - The Gospel-Driven Church (Sermon Transcript)**

I want to begin today by asking you a question. That question's at the top of your church program.

And I want you to think about this question. Sit on it. Marinate on it, dwell on it, whatever adjective you want to use there. I want you to think of this question throughout today's sermon. What do you think people would say your life is about? What do you think people would say your life is about? If they look at your life, if they look at your social media, if they listen to all the things you talk about, what would they say you are about?

You don't have to answer out loud. I want you to think about it. When I look at my, I scroll through my social media accounts, of course there's some Jesus things in there. And then there's a lot of brave stuff in there too. Some family things. Some good things that I love. It often shows us the things that we're passionate about.

Things we're excited about. But some of those things are good things. But in reality, the thing that we should be most about is the gospel of Jesus Christ. That no matter what, above any sports team, any job, any family member even, Jesus says, love me more than you love your own family. We are to be a gospel people.

That when people look at us, they know first and foremost, they're about Jesus and Jesus alone. So in our text today, I hope we see that. That we are to be first, foremost, gospel people. The gospel must drive everything we do as a church and as individuals. That must be the heartbeat of our life. Today we're going to read all of Acts chapter 3.

Now I mentioned at the beginning of this series that as we study the book of Acts we won't be able to cover everything. That we'll be able to hit some stories and other stories we'll have to pass over right now And we'll reference other stories throughout the book So I'm gonna read all of Acts chapter 3 and then at the end of today Towards the end of the sermon we'll look at Acts chapter 10.

All right, so we're gonna cover two chapters today Which is why I'm not worried kid life has everything together today. My mother in law is back there. That's my only concern So I would have to answer to that, but let's read Acts chapter 3 this morning And then we will respond to the reading of God's Word.



Now, this is a narrative. So as we read this story, I want you, in the best way possible, to place yourself in this story. To maybe try to see the visually, what's going on, the interactions with the different characters. And let's see what God's Word has to say to us this morning. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

And a man, lame from birth, was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gates of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate, to ask alms of those entering the temple. Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, Look at us.

And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, I have no silver and gold. But what I do have, I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

And leaping up, he stood and began to walk and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple. Asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, reigned together to them in the portico called Solomon's. And when Peter saw it, he addressed the people, Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Or why do you stare at us as though by our own power we have made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servants.

Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are all witnesses. In his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom and know.

And the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all and now brothers I know that you acted in ignorance as did also your rulers but what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ would suffer he thus fulfilled repent therefore and turn back that your sins may be blotted out that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord and that he may send that the Christ appointed for you Jesus whom heaven must receive until the time of For restoring all things about which God spoke by the



mouth of his holy prophets long ago Moses said the lord god will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers You shall listen to him And whatever he tells you and it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people And all the prophets who have spoken from samuel and those who came after him also proclaim these days You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that god made with your father saying to abraham And in your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness. This is the word of the Lord. Father, open our eyes to behold the wonderful truths from your word. Through your spirit that dwells within us, help us to see the splendor of your grace told through the message of Jesus.

We are nothing without you. May the anthem of our lives be about you and you alone. In your name we pray amen. There's a lot going on in this story. Let's look at the different characters and the setting to get a grasp of the context of what's taking place. At the beginning we see Peter and John, two disciples of Jesus.

They're headed to the temple to pray. It's about 3 p. m. in the afternoon. They're going to just pray. And they come across a lame man. Based on the context, we're assuming that he is paralyzed in his, at least his legs. He is not able to walk. He's not able to move his feet. He has been lame since birth. He has been carried to the beautiful gates where he sits there waiting, hoping someone will just give him a little bit of hope.

A few pieces of money to help support his life. He is literally at the mercy of other people. He can't even get to the place where he is supposed to be to collect money without someone helping him get there. And he's in a perfect location, by the way. The Jewish people, they were passionate about three things.

The law, temple worship, and the giving of alms to the poor. All of which Jesus addresses in the Sermon on the Mount. And so what better way? To get money if you cannot get money on your own through work than to sit at the temple Hoping that would you would come across a super religious jewish person who is hoping to knock out all three of the awesome things for spiritual Character and just say oh i've read the law today I've worshiped I can give money to the poor people and they walk away thinking they've done everything, right?

So he's in the perfect condition place to collect money and the gate that he's at is called the beautiful gate and it's exactly what that is. It's beautiful. The way it was



layered, it had Corinthian bronze, which was far more extravagant than silver and gold. It was a beautiful place. It described the wealth that could be received there.

And so poor people would sit out in front of the temple and hoping someone would show mercy to them. Hoping really that good Jews would be obedient to the law. As he's sitting there one day, he's probably done this thousands of times throughout his life. Probably got a cut there, just hoping someone would just drop it in and go on their way.

He's sitting there, when two men come across his path named Peter and John. And he asks them, sirs, do you have any money? And then, Peter says, hey, look at me. And in the text, the lame man thinks, hey, awesome, I'm about to get some money, this is great, they're not just going to pass me by. And then Peter looks him in the eye and says, I have no money.

Which you have to think for this man oh, great, what are we, what is he about to say to me now? Get up and get a job, right? He's probably heard all the criticisms. He can't. He is lame. He cannot walk. He's, in that culture, would consider worthless. He's practically a dead man. If Peter looks at him and says, I have no money, I've got something better.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, amen. Rise up and walk. And Peter reaches down with his hand and helps him up. You have to think, and we see that people see this take place. They know this man. They've walked the temple. He's been there for years. They know him by name. And Peter just says, stand up and walk.

And the man walks, stands up and walks. He's not faking this. This is a miracle that happens right in front of the temple. It's remarkable what takes place here. I mean Has your foot ever fallen asleep? And you're sitting there wondering I can't walk right now. And then the feeling comes back, and you're like, oh, good.

This man, think about, he has never, ever walked on his own two feet. And he gets up, and he rejoices. Now, this story, while awesome for, at the forefront of it man, who isn't going to get excited about a lame man being able to walk? This story actually changes the trajectory of the book of Acts.

Because, as we see in chapter 4, it starts making people mad, and now they're threatening Peter and John with prison and death. Because, as we said earlier, if they did it to Jesus, they will do it to his followers. From this point forward, we are going to see that people just don't get excited about things that should be remarkable.



Yet, God's people must always hold on to the power of the most remarkable message in all of the earth. The message of the gospel. Not much has changed in the world since then. The world will always be against the message of Jesus. And why this story helps us see that the importance of being a gospel people.

In Acts chapter 3 verse 16, Peter and John tell them why this happened. It says, in his name, referring to Jesus, by faith in his name. Has made this man strong whom and know and the faith that is through Jesus has given The man this perfect health in the presence of you all Peter and John are saying It is faith in Jesus that accomplished this miracle that you saw.

It's a display of God's power He's healed by his faith in Jesus Christ alone And that doesn't happen if the gospel doesn't drive everything that Peter and John are doing it is the center of their ministry You

Their actions and their response teach us what drives our church and what drives us as individuals of this church should be the message of the gospel. But first notice a few things that we can't be about from this story. First, we can't be about programs. As a church, we cannot be about programs. In verses one through three, there is a man who goes to the temple, the place of worship, to receive something that he thinks will be good for him.

This is a program driven approach. He is not going to serve others. He is expecting other people to serve him in a way that makes him feel like he has everything he needs. He does something to go to be helped. Yet, what he receives never changes his life. Someone could drop a million dollars in his lap and it would not change his condition.

He is still a lame man. And so often churches as a whole, and if we're not careful and what I'm, we're preaching through the book of Acts as we look towards the future, is that programs cannot drive our ministry. Having an awesome kids ministry does not change the condition of our children. Jesus changes their hearts.

Having great music does not change the condition of our hearts. These are good things, but if they become the driving force of our ministry, we'll fall short.

So we can't ask the question, what's in it for me? What's gonna help me? We'll see, it's the gospel that we all need each and every day. The church cannot be about personalities. Peter and John stand up, Peter says, listen, you gotta get over it. You think, in verse 12, it says, I'll read it for us. Peter saw it, he addressed the people.



Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this? Or why do you stare at us as though by our own power we have made him walk? Peter's it's not me that did it. It's not about me. The church cannot be about personalities. It's not centered on a person or a group of people. It's centered on one person and his name is Jesus.

Jesus is the one who is the head of the church. This is, Grace Life Church is not my church. You belong to Jesus. Jesus in his sovereign plan for the church has placed me alongside with Pastor Ben as shepherds of the church. At some point in time in the history of our church, I will no longer be a shepherd and pastor here.

I know that. I'm planning that to be 50 years down the road, all right? I'm preaching till I'm 90 right now. I got the energy to say that. But even then, the Lord, this is His church. So the church cannot be billed, cannot be about personality, personalities, and the church cannot be about traditions. In verse 13, we see that the men of Israel, these people know their history and their tradition.

Peter's even referencing it. You know about Moses and Samuel, and what scripture said. You know about your traditions, but you missed the whole point of what those traditions should be pointing to, and what they were pointing to, and it's Jesus. And how quickly we can even a church that's coming up on 10 years old can be about traditions.

We've always done it this way. Yeah, that doesn't mean we have to always do it that way. Thank you. All right. When we have our members meeting, let's have that same energy, okay? We can easily hold to what we want to be comfortable, what's easy for us to understand, which causes us to completely forget about Jesus.

We some of you guys know this. One of our, one of our cars died recently. It is bit the dust. Now, the car looks great on the outside. It looks like it's drivable, but you can't drive it. Now, if I place Dale Earnhardt Jr., let's use his dad, a better driver, Dale Earnhardt. That's who I wanted to use in the first play.

I just dogged Dale Jr. right here in the sermon. Sorry, Dale Jr. If he ever listens to it, I apologize. Dale Earnhardt in my car. A great driver. He's, it's worthless. The motor is dead in this car. He is not going to be able to drive it, even if he is the greatest driver of all time. The car's got a lot of bells and whistles.

It's nice, but it has no power. And there's a lot of memories with this car for us. Brought home kids in this car, we've had it for a long time, some tradition, some history. It's got no power. Do you see what I'm saying when it comes to the church? You can have the greatest preacher of all time, the greatest programs, all the bells and whistles.



You can have great history and still be powerless if the church is not about Jesus. We must be about the gospel. And I can't assume we know the gospel. It's a word that we don't often use, which we should use. A word we should be the most familiar with. Because if we get the gospel wrong, then we will lose it.

One author says, losing the gospel doesn't happen at once. It's much more like a four generation process. The gospel is accepted, then the gospel is assumed, then the gospel is confused, and the gospel is lost. You can see this taking place in our culture today, in our area, a place that's considered very conservative.

There's a generation before us where the gospel was accepted and believed. But now the gospel is just assumed. Yeah, I'm a good person. I'm going to heaven. People that could tell you stories about the Bible, but they have no relationship with Jesus. We see in other parts of our country where the gospel is confused.

And then in other parts of the country, we're seeing the gospel is lost. There are portions of our country where there is no gospel witness. Think about that for just a moment. With all of our freedoms, all of our current religious liberties, there are communities in parts of our country where there are no gospel preaching churches.

We just can't assume the gospel. Here's the definition I want to give you. There's much more components that we can include here, but it's not anything less than this. The Gospel is the good news about what God has done for sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is no gospel message if there is no grace of God, there is no gospel message.

If there is no Jesus, there is no gospel message. If Jesus does not die and rise again, three days later, the gospel is the good news about what God has done for sinners to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let's break that down. By looking at the story in Acts chapter 3. The gospel message centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

It starts there. The gospel is about Jesus. In Acts 3, 13 through 15, let me read it. Peter is addressing these people. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers glorified his servant Jesus whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate. When he had decided to release him, but you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and you killed the Author of Life, whom God raised from the dead.

To this we are witnesses. Do you see all the descriptions of Jesus in these three verses? The Servant of God, Holy and Righteous One, the Author of Life. Peter and John understand, and you see their sermons throughout the book of Acts, It's



always about Jesus. They are nothing without Jesus. Jesus is the glorified servant of God.

He is the one who is accomplishing God's mission in the world. That God the Father establishes a plan to save sinners and he does it through sending his son Jesus Christ who lives a perfect life. Jesus is a servant of God the Father. He even says, I didn't come to I came to serve because he sees us in our hour of need and serves us by giving his life for us.

Jesus is the holy and righteous one. He is not, Peter says, just a good prophet. He is not just a good teacher. He is the holy and righteous one. See, what happens in churches that assume the gospel, we want to bring down Jesus to a place that's palatable, where he's easy to take in. But in reality, we need to raise and elevate Jesus to where He rightfully belongs.

He is the Holy and Righteous One. There is no one like Him. He is sinless. The kids and I talk about this frequently, because it, if we think about it, the fact that He never sinned should just blow our minds. I can't even get out of bed without sinning. Anybody else like that? Good. I need at least two people to raise their hands so I don't feel alone, okay?

Thank you. Like we're just driving down the road. I mean think of think about this All right, because we all understand this think about what a new trash can system in our county does to our hearts yeah, like it like There's just things around us that help us see that we are sinners and Jesus is the Holy and Righteous One That might have been the greatest response I've ever received in a sermon right there, right?

There is no one like him You He is the holy and righteous one. And remember in the context that Peter and John are preaching, these are people who hated Jesus. And then to put him at the same level as God the Father is the reason why Jesus was put to death. Jesus is the holy and righteous one. Jesus is the author of life who was killed and whom God raised from the dead.

That not only was he holy and righteous, he was the perfect sacrifice. The author of life. The one who brings dead sinners to life. And he did it through dying on a cross. For us, dying the death that we deserved and conquering death three days later. There is no one like our Jesus. And when we hear the message of Jesus, it demands a response.

It demands a response. And you see the response that Peter and John give, as you continue on in that passage. Verse 16 it says, as we've read a couple times already, that it's by faith through Jesus that this man is healed. And now brothers, verse 17, I





know that you acted in ignorance as did also your rulers, but what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets that Christ would, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled.

And here's what Peter says to them. Repent, therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out. The Gospel message demands a response from sinners. And there's two responses.

There is understanding that by faith Jesus is the Savior. For sinners. This meant. Imagine, and we'll talk more about him in just a little bit, he's sitting there, his legs don't move, two random people walk up to him and said, in the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and walk. And Peter extends his hand.

Do you think it's going to take faith for a man who has been lame since birth to reach out his hand and hope that this man isn't just playing a cruel trick on him? And he grabs Peter by the hand and Peter helps him stand up and he can feel the change in his feet. It takes faith to say, okay, there's nothing I can do.

This is my condition. I'm helpless. I'm unable to do anything on my own. I'm at the mercy of others. But by faith I'm gonna believe that in the name of Jesus I will be healed.

That's one response is respond by faith to believe that Jesus died for you, and loved you, and will save you right now if you repent and confess your sin and believe in his name by faith. The other response seen in verse 23. If you reject Jesus, if you ignore his outstretched hand to rescue you from your sin, then It shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet, Jesus, shall be destroyed from the people.

There's two options to the gospel message. Life or death and destruction. The gospel demands a response

and it's the message that our world desperately needs and maybe some of you it's the message you need today. How will you respond to the gospel message? Maybe today you've never placed your faith in Jesus. Today is the day of your salvation. He will save you right here right now because he says whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

And even as Christians we respond to the gospel daily trusting the finished work of Jesus. To sustain every step of our lives. We also have to understand that not only is the gospel message centered on the person of Jesus, not only does the gospel message demand the response, but the gospel message is offensive.



We're going to talk more about this next week and in the weeks to come. I want to address it here. The world around us does not like the message of Jesus. And that's been the case since the story we even read in Acts chapter 3. The people, sinners, do not like the message of the gospel. Paul says in 18, For the word of the cross is folly, or foolishness, to those who are perishing.

But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For those of us who believed in Jesus, we know, phew, we are nothing without Jesus. But to those who are perishing, they think it's ridiculous and foolish.

You just believe an outdated book. Filled with myths.

I just want to live however I want to. My wealth and status is enough. That will get me through life. I've, I don't need someone else. I've done enough good things. Have you heard these responses? Pride? Or just the fact that people can't even fathom that Jesus died for people? For sinners? He just doesn't register?

The gospel message is offensive. 4, verses 1 through 2, you see it. And as they were speaking to the people, this is a response out of the council at the end of three. The priest and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them greatly annoyed. I love that. I want, we'll talk about this next week.

I want to annoy people because of my love for Jesus. Just saying. Because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. Do not be surprised that people reject the gospel we proclaim because it's foolishness to the world that's perishing. Does that stop us from proclaiming the gospel?

No. In fact, it should embolden us to proclaim even more. And it's why, right now is the time to stand on the gospel. It's October, which, we're coming up on the holiday season. In the month of October I love church history, little nerd about it, alright? And one of my favorite parts about church history is the time of the Reformation in the 1500s.

And it centers around a whole bunch of different people, but one figure, Martin Luther, becomes a focal point of the Reformation. The Catholic Church, I'm going to try to summarize hundreds of years in three minutes. The Catholic Church had gotten so far away from Scripture, it became unrecognizable.

And there were some few people that had looked at it and said, this isn't right. They look at Scripture and say, Scripture teaches something different. They were pushing



back. The Catholic Church would say, it's Scripture and tradition. A man like Martin Luther would say, No, it's just scripture alone.

The Catholic Church would say, Hey, it's faith plus works. And Martin Luther would say, No, it's faith alone that saves us. Works show our faith in Jesus. And then the Catholic Church would also say, Hey, if you give us a bunch of money, we will rescue your loved ones from death. And Martin Luther said that's not even in the Bible.

Can't even go close. So he, in just a point of just wanting to bring attention to it, Takes 95 statements, or called 95 theses, and nails it to the church door. And it sparks this really revolution, this reformation, all throughout Europe. Word gets back to the Pope, and Pope's not happy. Cannot make the Pope mad.

So the Pope put together this council. It's called the Diet of Worms. Which is just a great name in English for us, right? And they get together and they really, all they want is Martin Luther to recant everything he's saying and just fall in line like a good monk should and then just go about their business.

If he doesn't, then he'll be put to death. When it was time for Martin Luther to give a response, he says, Unless I am convinced by sacred scripture or by evident reason, I cannot recant, for my conscience is held captive by the word of God. And to act against conscience is neither right nor safe.

Here I stand, I can do no other, God help me. In the face of persecution and the threat of death, Martin Luther made a stand on the teachings of scripture. And how Luther postured himself then is how we're to posture ourselves now. It's the same way Peter and John postured themselves. We have to have a I don't care attitude when it comes to what the world thinks of us.

I don't care if you might think I'm a little weird because I believe the scripture. I don't care if you think I'm a thuddy dud or whatever grandpa word you want to use there. I don't care what you think about what I believe. You can threaten me with prison. You can threaten me with death. I'm standing on the message of the gospel.

And the time to stand on the gospel is now. Not when it gets difficult because let me be clear with you and honest with you. If you're not standing on the gospel now, what makes you think you're going to stand on the gospel when you're threatened with death? This is my concern for us as a church.

We, we can see the wind moving our country in a certain direction. Where the, our religious liberties are being threatened. Freedom of speech is being threatened. The time to take a stand for the gospel is now. Not when it gets hard. Because if you



can't take a stand now when it's nothing compared to what we could be facing, then you won't take a stand then.

Christian history teaches us this. How will you stand? What will you proclaim when you're threatened with jail time for preaching the message of Jesus? The last 200 plus years in our country are an anomaly to church history and around the world. Brothers and sisters are being put to death daily for proclaiming the same Jesus that we're proclaiming right now.

This message is not just a message to encourage us like, Yes, our church is awesome because we preach the gospel. This message is a reminder to stand on the gospel no matter what.

What does it look like to be a person that stands on the gospel, to be driven by the gospel, gospel shaped? We got a long ways to go and not a lot of time. Kid, life's good though, right? One is the gospel controls us. 2nd through 15. For the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

And he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. Paul is saying the love of Christ, the gospel message, controls my life. And we see this evident in Peter and John, that they're going to the temple. They're not afraid to do things in the name of the Lord, to proclaim the message of the gospel.

Because the gospel controls their lives. Everything we do as a church, as Christians, is an overflow of the heart. The more we love the Lord and behold his love for us, really, the more we stand on the message of the gospel. And if our heart has been hijacked by something else that controls us, then we are not in a good place.

We can easily be controlled by pride, hatred, impatience, money, materials. I could keep going, right? These are not marks of one controlled by the gospel.

We live in fear. of what could take place over the next couple of weeks and months and years. The anxiety cripples us. That's not being controlled by the gospel. Being controlled by the gospel understands that God is sovereign no matter what. He is in control no matter what. And when I die, my hope in life and death is that I belong to Jesus.

The gospel must control us. As a church, the gospel controls us. We do not make decisions based on what we think is going to make us popular. We make decisions based on What helps us proclaim the message of the gospel breaks our hearts for



sinner and Peter makes eye contact with this man. He looks down and sees his condition and he immediately understands that what this man desperately needs is Jesus. I think we've grown stale to the lostness around us. It should break our hearts to know that the sinners that we love are on their way to hell without Jesus. Should crush us.

It breaks my heart watching young men on my baseball team that I coach, struggling with anxiety, the lack of fathers,

and knowing that the only thing they really need is Jesus.

When you see a sinner, what's your response? Is it compassion, or is it anger because they're not acting the way you think they should act? If they just got their life together, that would make it easier for me. If they got their act together without Jesus, they're still on their way to destruction.

It's a compassion knowing there's nothing they can do to save themselves from their sin. The gospel will give life to the dead and broken people around us. I keep referring to this man's condition. He is lame. He is born with this condition, just like sinners are born in sin. There is nothing this man can do to walk.

There is nothing sinners can do to have life. We are completely at the mercy of another. We are completely at the mercy of another, of Jesus Christ. Towards sinners, who, when he looks at us and sees our condition, doesn't say, you're annoying, get out of my way. His heart is broken, and he extends a hand of grace and says, I will save you.

By faith, we believe that Jesus will give life to dead and broken sinners around us. Everything else is temporary, and money doesn't save someone from their sins. Programs, as we've already mentioned, only Jesus can. And when we see that, when the sinner places their faith in Jesus, what is the response?

What does this lame man do when he sees that his legs are working, what does he do? He rejoices. Rejoices at what's taken place. I can just imagine he stands up. I can't believe I'm about to do this. And he just does one of these things like, can you, what is going on? And he looks at his other friend over here, he's you're not gonna believe this.

The joy.

Some of us have lost our joy.



Psalm, David says in Psalm 51, Lord restore the joy of my salvation. I want to remember what it was like to wake up and say, can you believe this? I once was lost, but now I'm found. I once was a sinner, but now I'm saved. When was the last time we went leaping? Just because we're a Christian. If we were a different type of church, we'd probably exercise it in this some way, right?

Jump up and down. But why not? Should not we be the most joyful people despite our circumstances? Finally, we see that the gospel is for everyone. I recently saw a meme. This is a church history nerd. This is the opposite side. This is superhero nerd. Okay, so I know I'm going to lose like half of y'all, right?

If you know the Avengers movies, You see them saving the world. And the meme said, the Avengers saving the world, and it said, it had a picture of the world. And it was filled with water, and right in the middle of it was the United States of America. And I chuckled because in these stories, it's only like New York that's being rescued.

And so often we forget how big our world is. And this is the issue all around the world. Like people in Europe think Americans don't travel much. When I go to Georgia, it's like going to a different country in Europe, right? Like we, there's, our country's huge. This world is huge. And the gospel is not just for a certain people.

It wasn't just for the Jews. It's for all people. And here's where we turn to Acts 10 quickly. While you're turning there, I'll summarize the story. There's a man named Cornelius. He's a centurion. He loves the Lord, as we see in the first couple verses.

Feared God. One day he got a vision. That vision, he said, hey, go ask for Peter. Tell him to come to your house. So he sent some servants to do this. Now, Peter is on the different place, not too far away. He went up to the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. This is noon. While he's praying, Peter gets hungry and wants some food, as you would at lunchtime.

Then he goes into a trance, has some sort of vision, and God tells him, hey, eat. And there came to a voice, there's birds and all kinds of animals and reptiles, and the voice of him says, rise up, Peter, kill and eat. Now Peter's whoa, that's unclean food. We don't eat that type of stuff around here.

That's not it. I'm not eating that. Peter said, the voice comes, the voice of the Lord comes back to Peter and says, rise up, do it again. What God has made clean, do not call common. This happened three times. Now Peter's confused about this. He's perplexed. The text says. He doesn't know what to do about it.



He gets a knock on the door. Someone comes in and says, Hey, can you come to my town in Caesarea? My master wants to meet with you. And he's okay, I'll go and figure it out. While he's there, he intervenes. And with, he meets with this man, Cornelius. Peter's Cornelius, why did you summon me?

Cornelius said, vision from the Lord told me to come. Love the Lord. We want, God told me to come sin for you. Now Peter's Oh, now I get the vision that I had at lunchtime a couple days ago. It's here in this moment where Peter realizes that the gospel is not just for Jewish people. It is for the whole world.

In verses 34 through 48, I want you to hear this. Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly I understand that God shows no partiality. If he did, none of us would be on our way to heaven right now. I want you to think about that for a moment. But in every nation, which nations? Every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

As for the word that he sent to Israel preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all. You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth. With the Holy Spirit and with power, He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

And we are witnesses of all that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree. But God raised Him up on the third day and made Him to appear, not to all the people, but to us, who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.

And He commanded us to preach to the people. And to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the living and the dead. To him, all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins throughout his name. While Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

And the believers from among the circumcised, the Jewish people who had come with Peter, were amazed. Because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues, and extolling God. Then Peter declared, Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and they asked him to remain for some days. The gospel is for all people. Do we believe that?



That the gospel is for your neighbor, the neighborhoods right behind us? The gospel is for them. The gospel is for these people in Lake Asbury and Middleburg and Green Cove.

And if the gospel is for all people, then our church has to be about the gospel.

There's one thing the people around us need. It's not the greatest church on earth. It's not great programs. It's not great preachers.

It's not new policies, not money, not resources. Not education.

What we need is Jesus and the message of the gospel that he died and rose again for sinners like you and me. The gospel is what drives us to come to worship on a Sunday morning, even in the rain. Because we're a gospel people. It's the gospel that drives us even to come to church and sing songs, even if we don't have the greatest of voices.

Can I tell you, I love hearing great people with great voices sing, but there's something about someone singing to Jesus that's off-key. I love it. Because they're worshipping the Lord because the gospel is greater than anything. It's the gospel that drives us to pray for one another. To reach out to one another when we don't see them at church or in small groups.

The gospel is what drives us to be a part of a small group, a life group. Because we want to be with people who believe like we believe. It's the gospel that drives us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might, and our neighbor as ourselves. It's the gospel that drives us to go across the street with boldness and proclaim the message of the gospel.

I'll close with this story

that summarizes the question I asked at the beginning. When people look at your life, what will they say your life is about? There was a preacher in London in 1871 named R. C. Chapman. In his older years he was on a mission trip. At one he was taking, they were going by train, it would stop every town or so and then they would get out and share the gospel with the people at the train station, get on the train and go.

At one train station, they got stopped and they got sent to the mayor because it was making people mad. It's in the 1800s. And the pastor Chapman's just said, hey, I'm allowed to give out money, why can't I give out this gospel literature? It's better than money. So the mayor said, hey, go, okay, you're free, go.





They get on the train and they're warned on the train like, hey, if you thought that guy was bad, the place you're staying tonight, the landlord, he hates Christians. Hates them. I wouldn't recommend saying anything to him. So R. C. Chapman gets off the train and immediately goes and finds the landlord. Immediately.

And he says, "I got a question for you".

He said, there is one thing which English and Spanish people need more than anything else. Do you know what it is? As soon as he meets the landlord, ask this question. And the landlord says, I don't know. What? And R. C. Chapman says, peace with God. Do you have that peace with God, my friends? Because if you don't, I'm here to tell you about it.

Guess what that landlord did? It says, tell me about this peace with God that I can have.

We don't know how God is working in the lives of the people around us. And he desires to use us as individuals and as a church to be about the gospel. That's my prayer for us as we enter into just the new year and into the next few years. And when people look at your life and Grace Life Church, they will say.

There's no doubt they are about Jesus.

